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PP RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH RUEHTRO
DE RUEHGO #0358/01 1340720
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 130720Z MAY 08
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7565
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1177
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4721
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 8265
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5827
RHMMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 3699
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1594
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000358

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR USAID/OFDA, EAP/MLS, S/ES-O-CMS, DS/CC AND
DS/IP/EAP; PACOM FOR LTC JAMIE MCADEN; BANGKOK FOR RSO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAI](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA: CYCLONE NARGIS SITREP NO. 7

REF: RANGOON 352 AND PREVIOUS

SUMMARY

¶1. (SBU) EMBASSY OPERATIONS: Embassy Rangoon continued to operate on city power and had full diesel fuel tanks. On May 13, the remaining six EFMs who had requested to depart will leave post for Bangkok. No criminal incidents involving American staff or families were reported

¶2. (SBU) C-130 FLIGHTS: The first of two scheduled C-130 relief flights for May 13 arrived at 1045 and departed at ¶11158. The second flight is scheduled to arrive at 1400.

¶3. (SBU) SITUATION ON THE GROUND: GOB officials told the UN that assistance is urgently needed to help farmers in the delta plant their next rice crop in order to avoid a food shortage (Septel). NGOs with a presence in the delta told us Pathein and Myaungmya were not badly damaged but continued to receive large numbers of internally displaced persons from the worst hit areas. The UN and several well-established NGOs told us that authorities have not hampered their relief activities in areas of the delta in which they already had a presence or an existing Memorandum of Understanding. We received no reports of widespread looting or public disturbances in or around Rangoon, although RSO noted a continued lack of nighttime police presence at several police substations in central Rangoon.

EMBASSY OPERATIONS

¶4. (SBU) STAFFING AND OPERATIONS: Embassy Rangoon operated on its normal 0800-1630 schedule subject to a liberal leave policy.

¶5. (SBU) CONSULAR: Post distributed one OCS Trust account on May 12. We continued to work on pending welfare and whereabouts cases.

¶6. (SBU) AUTHORIZED DEPARTURE AND FLIGHTS: Six EFMs from three families will depart today, May 13 at 1945 hrs on Thai Air flight 306. There are no more EFMs who have requested to depart. Post will review the authorized departure on May 15

and inform the Department of its recommendations.

¶ 17. (SBU) FUEL AND POWER: The Embassy operated on city power and had full diesel storage tanks. We will request permission from the GOB to order more fuel. Facilities is conducting inspections and maintenance on residential generators to ensure they continue to operate properly.

¶ 18. (SBU) WATER: The Embassy continued to have adequate water supplies and purification capacity on hand.

¶ 19. (SBU) SECURITY: No criminal incidents involving American staff were reported. RSO will issue a security notice instructing American staff to report all in-country movements outside of Rangoon city limits.

C-130 FLIGHTS

¶ 10. (SBU) Two C-130 flights were scheduled to arrive at Rangoon International Airport today. The first landed at 1045 and departed at 1158 after unloading its cargo of relief supplies. The second is expected to arrive at 1400 and depart shortly thereafter. The planes will carry water, blankets, mosquito netting, tarps, nylon rope, water buckets, and plastic sheeting.

¶ 11. (SBU) We have received verbal clearance for five more C-130 flights scheduled for May 14, and are awaiting written confirmation from the GOB.

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SITUATION ON THE GROUND

¶ 12. (SBU) CASUALTIES AND DAMAGE: A local NGO with an established presence in the delta reported that the cities of Pathein and Myaungmya were not badly damaged but continued to receive large numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the worst hit areas. There are four IDP camps in Pathein, two run by the GOB and two by local Christian churches. There are 27 camps in Myaungmaya, five of which are in monasteries or churches, and the remainder run by the government. They expressed concern about the large number of orphans in Pathein, which they estimated at over 500, and were working to address this problem.

¶ 13. (SBU) RECOVERY AND RELIEF: The UN told us they now have relief flights arriving in Rangoon every day, and that the GOB was clearing and releasing supplies immediately. The GOB has granted the UN a blanket endorsement for all incoming UN flights provided they receive one day's advance notice by phone. GOB officials told the UN that most relief supplies are now being distributed in the delta by boat rather than air.

¶ 14. (SBU) The UN and several well-established local and international NGOs told us that authorities have not hampered their relief activities in areas of the delta in which they already had a presence or an existing Memorandum of Understanding. Two NGOs with a presence in the delta reported they have had no trouble in procuring needed goods from local markets and transporting in goods they cannot get locally. In one case, they pointed out that the Minister of Transport has been working to ensure that an NGOs shipment of water purification tablets would be off-loaded at the airport and sent directly to NGO in the delta. As a result, they told us they have been able to deliver supplies of food, medicine, and clothing, and have deployed a medical team and search and rescue teams to these areas. However, they noted that conducting relief operations in areas where they did not already have a presence before the storm has been more difficult. Additionally, they were concerned that the deployment of numerous high-level GOB officials to the affected areas could complicate authorities' decision making,

although they acknowledged this has not yet happened.

¶15. (SBU) FUEL: Fuel prices in Rangoon remained stable.

¶16. (SBU) FOOD AND WATER: Food in Rangoon was still expensive, especially meat and rice. Shortages in the delta continued.

¶17. (SBU) ELECTRICITY: Power was restored to more neighborhoods in Rangoon, but much of the city, and most of the delta was without city power.

¶18. (SBU) LAW AND ORDER: We received no reports of widespread looting or public disturbances in or around Rangoon. RSO noted there continued to be a lack of nighttime police presence at several police substations in central Rangoon. RSO met with his police liaison on May 12. The official asserted crime remained low, but did not provide any substantive information on police staffing, specific statistics or potential security threats.

¶19. (SBU) VISAS: GOB officials told the UN that all UN visas would be granted without specifying when, but said visas for NGO relief workers would be decided on a case by case basis.

VILLAROSA